

4VAC15-90-510 (New)
Game: Deer: Elk hunting within the Elk Management Zone

Summary:

This proposal outlines the seasons, bag limits, and tag validation associated with administering the hunting of elk within the Elk Management Zone.

Proposed language of the amendment:

4VAC15-90-510. Elk hunting within the Elk Management Zone.

- A. Open season; generally. It shall be lawful to hunt elk within the Elk Management Zone from the Second Saturday in October through the following Friday, both dates inclusive.
- B. The seasonal bag limit for elk shall be one per season as prescribed on the special elk hunting license. The department shall determine the number and type of special elk hunting licenses distributed within a season and license year.
- C. Except as provided in 4VAC15-90-540 or 4VAC15-90-550 individuals selected to purchase a special elk hunting license shall not be eligible to receive a subsequent special elk hunting license for a period of three (3) years.
- D. All licensed elk hunters and persons accompanying elk hunters are required to wear, or display, a blaze color as described in § 29.1-530.1.
- E. Upon killing an elk, any licensed hunter shall validate the tag on their special elk hunting license and report the elk in accordance with procedures outlined in 4VAC15-90-231. Upon receiving a confirmation number, the hunter must call the department to schedule an inspection of the carcass and the site of kill for the collection of biological samples.

Rationale:

With the passage of § 29.1-305.01 and the associated creation of a Special Elk Hunting License within the Elk Management Zone (EMZ), separate regulations needed to be established for elk hunting outside and within the EMZ. The proposed sections related to season bag limits, blaze color requirement, and tag validation and reporting are all consistent with subsequent sections in other big game species regulations. The requirement allowing the Department the opportunity to collect biological samples is consistent with regulations for hunting elk outside the EMZ. In accordance with the VA Elk Management Plan, biological sampling of elk is conducted on harvested or dead elk as part of a proactive disease sampling effort. Bag limits will be established to “manage elk in a manner that maintains a healthy and viable population within the EMZ” as prescribed by Conservation Goal 1 in the VA Elk Management Plan. The proposed 7-day open season would provide a balance between providing an adequate opportunity for hunters to pursue elk and minimizing potential disturbance on the overall elk herd. Since the number of special elk hunting license will be limited and only administered through a Department elk program, establishing an ineligibility period for an individual following a successful selection for a special elk hunting license, promotes a fair and equitable administration of licenses.